

SCADDING

METALLIC
RECORDS
OF LUTHER

1884



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METALLIC RECORDS

OF

MARTIN LUTHER.

A PAPER READ AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE
FOUR HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF LUTHER,
HELD AT TORONTO, NOVEMBER 10, 1883.

BY

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CANON OF TORONTO.

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[As the world-wide enthusiastic observance of the 400th anniversary of Luther's birth has had the effect of stirring up the natural haters of the great Reformer to revive a multitude of stale and oft-refuted calumnies and slanders against Luther and perversions of his writings, it is in place to ask readers to procure and calmly examine a concise volume by Charles Hastings Collette, entitled "Luther Vindicated" (London : Quaritch, 1884). For the most recent and authoritative biography of Luther, the following should be procured: "Life of Luther," by Prof. Julius Köstlin, with illustrations from authentic sources. Translated from the German. New York : Charles Scribner's Sons, 1883.]



METALLIC RECORDS OF LUTHER.

The French have an expression which we have not yet adopted, but which among the other French expressions occasionally found convenient we might adopt with advantage : Metallic History (*Histoire Métallique*). To describe in English what the expression means we have to employ the circumlocution : History as recorded on Coins and Medals. We want a shorter way of saying this, as such History has now often to be referred to, specifically. The inscriptions and portraits, the miniature representations of incidents and delineations of places and buildings, together with the symbols and allegorical groups, met with on coins and medals, are all found to be of considerable importance. In some cases they have supplied gaps in historical narrations which could not otherwise have been filled up. Most of the modern illustrated works on history, and the historical articles in Encyclopædias, abound, as we must have observed, with cuts of coins and medals, coeval as nearly as possible with the incidents and persons and times spoken of. These reproductions, appealing at once to the eye, enable us often to realize with great vividness the facts, the scenes, the agents, described in the text.

For purposes of study, Metallic Histories, or books containing a series of accurate copies of historical coins and medals, in chronological order, are the next thing to the coins and medals themselves, which it falls to the lot of few persons to possess, or sometimes even to have access to, and handle for a few moments. In many cases such coins and medals are excessively rare ; and in some cases the specimen is absolutely unique, so far as known. Hence Metallic Histories are laid hold of with avidity by numismatic amateurs and

others, whenever they have the chance. It is thus that I have happened to accumulate a good many of this class of books ; and it has occurred to me that one of them might be brought forward with acceptance on the present occasion, when the Quater-centenary of Luther is being so generally celebrated. It contains in it a large number of copper-plate etchings of medals illustrative of Luther's life and times. I refer to a work by a German scholar named Christian Juncker, who lived some two centuries back. It is written in Latin and was printed at Schleusingen in 1699 by George William Goebel, for George Andrew Endter, bookseller, of Nuremberg, and sold by him at Frankfort and Leipsic. It is a duodecimo, bound in fine white vellum. The whole title of the book, translated, reads thus : "A Life of Dr. Martin Luther, and History of the Successes of the Evangelical Reformation, and of the Evangelical Jubilees, confirmed and illustrated by one hundred and forty-five medals and a few rare portraits : thus comprising not only a narrative of the rise and progress of the Evangelical Reformation, but also curious notices of numerous particulars of Luther's family and relics of himself deposited here and there in Museums and Libraries ; affording, likewise, down through the subsequent events, a convenient account of the Evangelical Jubilees."

The Evangelical Jubilees here mentioned were the festive commemorations of important incidents in the history of the Reformation, held in the various cities of Germany, up to the date of Juncker's book, 1699 ; occasions always marked by the issue of medals, silver or bronze or white-metal, bearing appropriate inscriptions and devices. Towards the end of the volume numerous medals commemorative of such Jubilees are figured and described. The present fourth centenary of Luther's birth will, doubtless, in Germany and elsewhere, be prolific of medals, all of them destined to be of more or less interest and value to existing and future numismatists. The few rare portraits spoken of in the title-page to Juncker's book are heads of Luther's father and mother ; of Luther himself at various stages of his career ; of his wife Catharine Von Bora, and of his daughter Magdalena, all of them, I believe, after Lucas Cranach. The volume is dedicated to a near ancestor of our George the First, who bore the same title : Rudolph Augustus, Duke of Brunswick and Lunenburg, to whose family Christian Juncker was official historiographer.

On the medals presented to us in Juncker's book the image and superscription of Luther, of course, continually appear. The heads of the Reformer, however, as seen on the medals do not, with any closeness, agree with one another. Artists and engravers seem to have allowed themselves to form their own ideals of the man. Most of us, I suppose, have a Luther pictured in our minds, just as we have a Shakespeare. In both cases the variations in the current portraits are quite considerable. Nevertheless there are characteristics enough common to all of them to enable us to recognize almost immediately any portrait or bust or statue intended for either Shakespeare or Luther. Differences to the contrary notwithstanding, we know Luther on these medals by his bluff, good-tempered, powerful, honest face; his leonine eye; his taurine neck and massive shoulders; his heavy scholastic gown. Occasionally the head is extensively tonsured, and the monk's cowl appears thrown back. Sometimes the countenance is seen in profile and sometimes as turned towards the spectator. In the later medals the features are more emaciated, and furrowed over with lines of thought and patient endurance of suffering.

The first medal in which I shall endeavor to raise an interest, under the disadvantage of not being able, unfortunately, to exhibit the object itself, is one shewing on the obverse a head of Luther with face turned towards the beholder. The aspect is youthful. The epigraph or superscription at the margin is: "Dr. Martin Luther of Eisleben." "Doctor Martinus Lutherus Eislebensis." Having greatly distinguished himself as a Professor and Lecturer on Philosophy and Divinity at the University of Wittenberg, and having succeeded also well in a mission to Rome on business of great importance to the Augustinian monastic community, of which he was a member, he was required by his superiors, quite against his own inclination, to receive the degree of Doctor, on St. Luke's Day, Oct. 19th, 1512. A portion of the oath taken on the occasion was to the effect that he would study and proclaim the Holy Scriptures all his life, and also defend the holy Christian faith in writing and preaching, against all heresies. These words in the assumption of a Doctor's degree had become somewhat of a dead formula. But Luther took them as real words, and conscientiously acted upon them.

On the reverse side of the medal, running in straight lines across, is the following inscription in Latin : " Luther, the Theologian, was born at Eisleben in Saxony, a man pious, energetic and brave : the Elias of the last age." It may seem strange that the year of his birth is not named. The explanation is this : The inscription is what is called a chronogram, and it gives the date after a mystical fashion, not unusual at the time. Certain letters which, as Roman capitals, serve as numerals, are engraved larger or higher than the rest. The sum total of the letters, thus distinguished, when taken as numerals, is 1483, just four hundred years back from the present year. The Latin inscription is : " Lutherus, theologus, in Saxoniâ, vir pius et Elias ultimi seculi, natus est Eislebii, vivax et fortis." The *v*'s are to be considered *v*'s, and each to stand for 5. Then we have : m = 1000 : c = 100 : 6 l = 300 : 10 v = 50 : 2 x = 20 : 13 i = 13. Together 1483.

The Elias of the last age : Elias ultimi seculi. So Luther was deemed in his day and generation. The Third Elias : Tertius Elias, appears inscribed round his head on another medal : the first being of course the original Elias, Elijah, the Tishbite, who preached reform in the kingdom of Israel in the times of Ahab and Jezebel : and the second, John the Baptist, who, in the spirit and power of the first Elias, preached reform to the Jewish nation just before the public ministry of the Messiah. The reverse of this medal shews an angel flying through the midst of heaven, bearing in his hand a book marked " Æternum Evangelium," and sounding a trumpet aloft, with the words running round the margin : " Babylon the great, hath fallen, hath fallen." " Cecidit, cecidit Babylon magna." Below the angel a heavy cloud is rolling away. Death, a skeleton, is seen fleeing, and underneath are the ruins of a city. The drift of this imagery is manifest : but an allusion to a special fact in history may be latent. In 1527 Germany and the world were astounded by the news that the city of Rome had been taken and sacked by a German army, and its bishop, Julius de Medici, Clement VII., imprisoned in the castle of St. Angelo. This startling incident may have suggested the medal.

Again : There is a direct reference to the Elijah-like character of the Reformer in the inscription seen surrounding his head on another

medal. The chariot and charioteer of Israel: "Currus et auriga Israelis."

Luther indeed was saluted, not solely as another Elijah, but in more general terms as The Prophet of Germany: the instructor of the Teutons. This title is adjudged to him still, throughout the immensely enlarged area which the Teutons now occupy. In him was openly initiated the Teutonic phase of Christianity, which is expected by many to take, in its turn, the place of the Latin phase, as that did of the Greek, in the Divine order of things. On a medal in the work before us, we have Luther grasping with both hands a book, and the inscription round the margin: "Martin Luther, the Prophet of Germany: 1537." "Martinus Lutherus, Propheta Germaniæ: 1537." On the reverse is a shield supported by angels and displaying an emblem which was a favourite with Luther: it was engraved upon his seal: an open rose with a human heart at its centre, bearing on it or over it, a cross. The motto surrounds it: "In silence and in hope shall be your strength." "In silentio et spe erit fortitudo vestra." This symbol, on another medal, I observe, has the words: "In endurance there is sweetness": "In patientiâ suavitas," round it; and on the reverse of this specimen is the rhyming couplet in German, now become somewhat archaic:

"Der Christen Herz auf Rosen geht,
Wens mitten unter dem Creuz steht."

"The Christ-like heart the Cross below,
Around its path sees roses blow."

Several medals seek to make manifest a relation between John Huss, the great Bohemian Reformer, and Luther. Huss, as we shall remember, derived his light, under God, from "the morning-star of the Reformation," our John Wycliffe, whose writings and translation of the New Testament he had met with. Huss was in a position of great influence, being President of the University at Prague. His King Wenceslaus protected him within the limits of his jurisdiction, just as John of Gaunt and Lord Henry Percy protected Wycliffe, and Frederic, Elector of Saxony, and other nobles protected Luther. But with less success. A safe-conduct granted to Huss by the Emperor Sigismund, was dishonorably repudiated by that priest-ridden prince;

and when once in the power of the Latin authorities at Constance, the Bohemian Reformer, without interposition on the part of Sigismund, was mercilessly devoted by them to the flames. When the sentence was pronounced upon him, and about to be carried into effect, he with solemnity said to his judges : " For this, in one hundred years, ye shall answer to God, and to me." These words were pronounced in 1415. The prediction was regarded as fulfilled in the successes of Luther, which began to take place about one hundred years later. On one of Juncker's medals we have the heads of Huss and Luther together. Each holds a book. On a band round the outer margin are Huss's memorable words, given thus : " After one hundred years ye shall answer to God and to me. The vaticination of John Huss ; burnt 1415." " Centum annis revolutis, Deo et mihi respondebitis. Vaticinium Johannis Hussi, combusti, anno 1415." Then, on an inner band, we have the reputed fulfilment of the prediction put on record thus : " These years having passed, Dr. Martin Luther was stirred up from on high, by God, to undertake the purification of doctrine : 1517." " His lapsis annis, Doctor Martinus Lutherus ad reparandam doctrinam cœlitus a Deo excitatus est, anno 1517."

Another prophetic saying of John Huss, popularly held to have been verified in Luther, is commemorated again and again, on the medals. The meaning of the proper name Huss in Bohemian is Goose. When Huss was being committed to the flames, he said to his executioners : " Ye may burn this Goose ; but from its ashes will rise hereafter a Swan whose singing ye shall not be able to silence." Accordingly we have on the medals a swan as the symbol of Luther ; and sometimes a swan stands by him.

On one medal we have a large swan swimming in open water, illuminated by rays descending from the sacred Tetragram above, representing God. Encircling all this is the inscription : " A swan, through power from God, unconquered : 1517." " Olor invictus virtute Divinâ : 1517."

Round another swimming swan, of later date, are these words in Luther's vernacular : " Auf Wasser lauter swam ein Swan weisz." " In water clear a white swan swam."

And round another swan in similar action is the German rhyming distich :

“ Gottes Wort ist Luther's Lehr ;
Darumb verght sie nimmer mehr.”

“ What God's book saith, doth Luther say :
So Luther's words do bide alway.”

It will be remembered that when the Latin authorities procured the burning of Huss at Constance, they ordered also the exhumation and destruction by fire of the remains of Wycliffe, which for forty-one years had been resting in peace under the chancel at Lutterworth. Unlike the more noble-minded Charles V., at a later period, they were willing to war with the dead, and the decree was accordingly executed. A delegation in due time appeared at Lutterworth, They took up the bones that remained of Wycliffe, and reduced them to ashes, which they cast into the Swift, a neighbouring brook. Thus, to quote once more the words of Fuller, the Church Historian of Britain : “ This brook hath conveyed his ashes into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over.”

One medal gives the head of Huss on one side and that of Luther on the other. Round Huss's head is the sentence : “ Faith alone makes us accepted with God.” “ Sola Deo acceptos nos facit esse fides.” Round Luther's head we have : “ Living I was thy plague. O Pope : dead, I shall be thy death.” “ Pestis. eram vivus, moriens ero mors tua, papa.” A prediction unfulfilled, Lord Macaulay and others would say. But I do not know. After all that was said and done at the time of the Reformation, advisedly and unadvisedly, it should be remembered that only abuses were really aimed at. And, practically, at this moment the Latin papacy is not what it was in the days of Julius II. The more candid of its modern supporters allow, I believe, that they as well as we owe something to Luther. So that, in a broad sense, the prophecy on the medals has been fulfilled, and is being fulfilled. Who amongst us did not read with satisfaction the other day the document proceeding from the present Bishop of Rome, Leo the Thirteenth, decreeing that for the future the Vatican archives should be free to historical students ? And who amongst us does not heartily unite in the aspiration subjoined to the

announcement: "May it please God that many be influenced by a desire to investigate historical truth, and derive from it a useful training."

Luther's courageous conduct at the Imperial Diet held at Worms is commemorated by a medal on which his head is surrounded by the words: "Blessed is the womb that bare thee." "*Beatus venter qui te portavit.*" And on the reverse we have the following, in the form of a Latin distich: "Where the neighbouring Vangiones approach the Rhine-bank, he stood before Cæsar and before mighty princes, 1521," *i. e.*, at Worms, Borbetomagus, the capital of the ancient Vangiones.

"*Cæsar is ante pedes, procures stetit ante potentes,
Accola quâ Rheni Vangio littus adit.*"

The "*stetit*" in the Latin was doubtless intended to recall the memorable words: "Here stand I. I can do no otherwise. God help me. Amen." "*Hier stehe ich. Ich kann nicht anders. Gott helfe mir. Amen.*"

The capture of Luther by masked horsemen in the Thuringian forest when on his way home from Worms, by way of Eisenach and Möhra, and his abduction to the castle of Wartburg in disguise,—stratagems of his friend Frederic, Elector of Saxony, anxious for his personal safety—are recorded thus on a medal, also in the form of a Latin distich: "Hurrying from the Rhine, he is seized. Escaping the papal toils, he seeks the shelter of a Patmos well and secretly contrived for him.

"*A Rheno properans capitur. Bene conscia Pathmi
Tecta papæ fugiens retia structa petit.*"

The obverse of this medal shews Luther in curious guise. His hair and beard are grown, and he is "clad in complete steel." Around him is the epigraph or legend: "Back from Patmos, 1522." "*Reversus à Pathmo, 1522.*"

All this is to be interpreted by the well-known story of his sojourn at the Wartburg. While detained there he was treated as a layman, and was spoken of by the guards and attendants as the young Noble, George, and the Knight, George. He was not required to wear an

iron-mask like another less fortunate captive ; but his cropped hair was allowed to grow, and he became graced with a fine beard. He was still in communication with his friends. Indignant at excesses committed by professed followers of his at Wittenburg, in his absence, he first paid a secret visit to that place ; and, shortly afterward, quitted the Wartburg altogether, without asking leave of the Elector. On this occasion some Swiss travelling students fell in with him at an inn—the Black Bear, by the way—at Jena ; and one of them, Johannes Kessler, has left an extended record of the interview. Abbreviated, it is as follows : “ In the sitting-room,” Kessler says, “ we found a man sitting alone at a table, a little book lying before him : he greeted us kindly, and called us forward to sit beside him at the table : he offered us drink, which we could not refuse : but we did not imagine that he was other than a horseman who sat there dressed according to the custom of the country, in a red cap, simple breeches and jacket : a sword at his side, holding with his right hand the pommel of the sword, with the other his book. And we asked him : “ Master, can you tell us whether Martin Luther be at this time at Wittenberg, or at what place he may be found ? ” He replied : “ I am well informed that Luther is not at this time at Wittenberg, but he is soon to be there. Philip Melanchthon is there however : He teaches Greek and Hebrew also : both necessary for understanding the Scriptures.” “ In such conversation he became quite familiar with us,” Kessler observes, “ so that my companion at last took up and opened the little book which lay before him : it was a Hebrew Psalter.” The landlord afterwards informed them who the stranger was.

While in his Patmos at the Wartburg, Luther's pen was very busy. For one thing, he laboured hard at translating the Greek Testament into German. It was not however until the year 1534 that the translation of the Old Testament from the Hebrew was completed by the aid of Melanchthon, Bugenhagen, Cruciger, Justus Jonas, Armsdorf and others. This gift of the Old and New Testament to the German people, in readable, intelligible German, is symbolized on the medals by a hand removing a bushel-measure or modius from off a lighted candle. Some medals shew the interior of a room illumined by a large candle on a table : a bushel-measure which has just been taken off from the light, is seen thrown under the table. A legend

round this device is: "Now it shines to all, the bushel being removed." "*Jam lucet omnibus, modio remoto.*"

We meet with a medal commemorative of the marriage of Luther. It has on the obverse the inscription: "Rejoice in the Lord": "*Lætamini in Domino,*" and the reverse shews the head of Catharine von Bora, his wife.

A somewhat indefinite inscription on a medal bearing the head of Luther is curious: "*Vir multa struens*"—"A man or hero devising many things." The phrase is too general to be of itself very noticeable; but it becomes interesting when we learn that the words are an anagram of the name of Luther, written *Martinus Luterus*. There used to be a conceit about anagrams, that they mystically shadowed forth character or destiny, like the famous one of Horatio Nelson. "*Honor est à Nilo:*" "His distinction is from the Nile." Taken as an anagram, "*Vir multa struens,*" was a sufficiently accurate forecast of Luther. He devised many and great things, and accomplished them too. The pen was a powerful instrument of his. Theodore Beza said Luther's pen was mightier than the club of Hercules.

"I, nunc, Alciden memorato, Græcia mendax.
Lutheri ad calamum, ferrea clava nihil."

"Go now, thou fabling Greece, and boast no longer
Alcides' club, for Luther's pen is stronger."

On one of the medals we have the Reformer represented not exactly as Hercules, but as Samson grappling with a lion. The surrounding legend is: "He stopped the mouth of the Lion." "*Obtavit os Leonis.*" The stop put to Leo the Tenth's indulgences is, in the first instance, alluded to.

Time would fail to mention and describe all the numismatic memorials of Luther brought before us in Juncker's work. I reluctantly pass by many; especially those relating to his friends: and in particular those relating to Melanchthon, of whom I should like to speak. I pass by also the Jubilee medals, struck by several princes and imperial cities of Germany.

I hasten on to notice briefly some of those that refer to Luther's death. They generally shew on the obverse the usual profile or full-

faced representation of Luther. But in some the eyes are closed ; and in some the head droops as in sleep, like Bunyan's in old copies of the Pilgrim's Progress. One, after giving the year of the death, 1546, gives the day of the month, the 18th of February, and place of death, in poetic strain, thus (the words in Latin form an Hexameter and Pantameter couplet) : " Rising in gloom the twice-ninth sun of February paused whilst thou, glorious Luther, dost die, on the spot where thou wast born," *i. e.*, at Eisleben.

" Nona bis obscura lux Februa constitit ortu,
In patrio ut moreris, clare Luthere, solo."

For the circumstances that led to Luther's being at Eisleben just then, and for a touching account of his last moments, I must refer you to a letter written by his friend, Justus Jonas, given in the biographies.

Another medal records the year of the death in a chronogram, which in English reads thus : " Lo ! now in the peace of Christ, the just man dies, with a safe and blessed departure." " Ecce nunc moritur justus in pace Christi, exitu tuto et beato." The letters marked as numerals in the inscription make up the date, 1546.

I sincerely trust that this solemn observance of the Quater-centenary of the birth of Martin Luther may have the effect of reviving in Toronto and everywhere a comprehensive study, not only of the life and acts of Luther, but of the Luther period in European history. This can be calmly done now, and with a literary apparatus not enjoyed some years ago. Parties and schools on both sides, the Latin as well as the Teutonic, may derive benefit from such a re-investigation. We all tend to slide into error of excess or defect if the Past be not ever and anon freshened up and made present again before us.

One observation on a difference between the Reformation in Germany, France and other Continental countries and the Reformation in the British Islands, and I have done. It is a difference which is sometimes overlooked.

On the continent of Europe the recognized authorities in Church and State, everywhere it may be said, resisted reform. In the

British Islands, on the contrary, it so happened that the recognized authorities in Church and State accepted it, and, in their way, made it for all future time a fundamental principle in policy and a part of the law of the land. Almost everywhere on the continent, even after success obtained at the point of the sword, all that the Reformed secured, for a very long time at least, was toleration. The chief secular and ecclesiastical powers in theory stood as they were before.

On the European continent—a vast area divided into innumerable states, kingdoms, principalities, dukedoms, free municipalities and cantons—reform was not so easily managed.

In the British Islands—a circumscribed space, with one Government for all—it was practicable. Accordingly it was undertaken, and, to speak in round terms, effected. As then settled, it remains in force; and to this day most persons born and bred within the limits of the British Empire continue to be more or less moulded in character by it.





